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The Nationalities Question

by Murray N. Rothbard

Upon the collapse of centralizing totalitarian communism in Eastern Europe and even the Soviet Union, long suppressed ethnic and nationality questions and conflicts have come rapidly to the fore. The crack-up of central control has revealed the hidden but still vibrant "deep structures" of ethnicity and nationality.

To those of us who glory in ethnic diversity and yearn for national justice, all this is a wondrous development of what has previously lived only in fantasy or longing: it is a chance in Europe at long last, to begin to reverse the monstrous twin injustices of Sarajevo and Versailles. It is like being back in 1914 or 1919 again, with a chance for the map of Europe and near Asia to be righted and redrawn.

For the first time since the end of World War II, or arguably since Versailles, the world is in a "revolutionary situation." There are many problems and costs to such a revolutionary situation, costs that are well-known and need not be repeated here; but there are also many benefits: currently, not only the collapse of socialism/communism, but the sense that all things are possible, and that justice may come at last to a long-suffering area of the world.

Most Americans, however, are puzzled and disturbed rather than delighted at the re-emergence of the nationalities question. We can separate the worried or hostile reactions into four groups: (a) the average American; (b) Marxist-Leninists; (c) global democrats, which include the liberal and neoconservative wings of the ruling American Establishment; and (d) modal libertarians.

Hostiles: the Average American

First, the average American is uncomprehending of the very problem. Why can't all these groups live-and-let-live, and join peacefully together as has the United States in its "melting pot" of varied immigrant groups? In the first place, this Pollyanna view of America overlooks the black question, which has scarcely settled into any melting pot, and is more mired in deep conflict now than at any time since the late 19th century. But even setting that aside, no peaceful "melting pot" existed in the 19th century. From the 1830s until after World War I, northern, "Yankee," mainstream Protestantism (with the excep-

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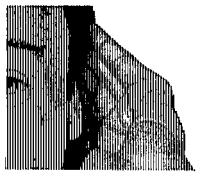
It is a chance in Europe at long last, to begin to reverse the monstrous twin injustices of Sarajevo and Versailles.



THE EAR

by Sarah Barton

In approved Rockefeller style, ex-libertarian billionaire Charles Koch has set up a chair in "global economics" at George Mason University for Manuel Johnson, ex-vice chairman of the Federal Reserve. Mannie will also head a new Koch-funded think-tank at GMU to promote world central banking, a world currency, and world government. Note: Mannie is the third high State official to go on the Koch payroll, the others being James Miller of Citizens for a Sound Economy and William Niskanen of Cato.

Kochian Edward H. Crane of the Cato Institute has long warned people not to discuss the Trilateral Commission, and David Koch, Charles's brother, has tried to silence criticisms of the power-elitist Bohemian Grove.

Charles & Co. have gone from Birchers to LeFevrian anarchists to Rothbardians to Pete

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(THE EAR cont. from P.1)

Dupont'ers to world- governmenteers. Charlie, you've come a long way since you funded the first R's idea for a libertarian Cato Institute.

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Like many other champions of the Libertarian Party, Bill Bradford, editor of *Liberty*, should learn to guard his back while dealing with them. National Committee minutes, spread far and wide on the electronic bulletin board, are implying that BIII did not play fair, money wise, in his exchange of mailing lists with the national party. Tsk, tsk, Bill! ●

(NATIONALITIES cont. from P.1)

tion of old- style Calvinists and high-church Lutherans) were captured by an aggressive and militant post-millennial pietism whose objective was to use government to stamp out "sin" (especially liquor and the Catholic Church), and who made the lives of Catholic and German Lutheran immigrants miserable and put them under constant attack for nearly a century. Finally, the pietists succeeded in imposing immigration restrictions and national origin quotas after World War I.

But even setting all that aside, the United States of America was a unique development in the modern world: a roughly "empty" land (with the notable exception of American Indians), peopled by a large number of mainly European religious ethnic and national immigrant groups, within the framework of a mainly free, constitutional Republic under the rubric of English as the common, public language.

Other nations in Europe and Asia developed very differently, often with native nationalities conquered and dominated by "imperial" nations. Instead of one public language, the oppressor nationalities invariably tried to obliterate the languages and even the names of conquered nationalities. One of the most moving cries during last year's implosion of communism came from the suppressed Turkish minority in Bulgaria and the conquered "Moldavians" (i.e. Romanians) in Soviet Moldavia, grabbed from Romania after World War II: "give us our names back!"

The Moldavians want to shed the hated Russian names imposed by the Soviet state, as well as the even more hated Cyrillic forced upon them in place of their Latin alphabet. And this national obliteration is not just a product of Communism. It is an age-old practice: "imperial" France still forbids the Celts of Brittany to name their children according to Celtic nomenclature; and the Turks, still not admitting their genocidal massacre of the Armenian minority during World War I, also refuse to acknowledge the very existence of their Kurdish minority, referring to them contemptuously as "mountain Turks."

"Imperial" France still forbids the Celts of Brittany to name their children according to Celtic nomenclature.

Hostiles: the Marxist-Leninists

The Marxist-Leninists are a dying breed, but it is fascinating to consider their now vanishing role on this issue. Their reputation as "anti-imperialists" has nothing to do with classical Marxism. In fact, Marx and Engels, consistent with their pro-modernizing approach, aggressively favored Western imperialism (especially that of the Prussians as against the hated Slavs). This stance accorded with their view that the faster capitalism and "modernization" advance, the sooner the "inevitable final stage" of history, the proletarian communist revolution, will take place.

Lenin, however, pragmatically junked Marxism to side with the Third World and other peasantry, which he saw perceptively as far riper for revolution than the advanced capitalist nations. In practice, however, Leninism, while giving lip-service to the right of national self-determination (enshrined on paper in the Soviet Constitution but always ignored in practice), was a centralizing universalist creed transcending nationalities. More important, the actual Leninist cadre in every country were deracinated intellectuals (often colonials educated by Marxist- Leninist professors in the imperial centers of London, Paris, and Lisbon), who were generally ignorant of, and contemptuous or hostile toward, ethnicity, religion, and culture. The official compul-

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sory atheism of Marxist-Leninists was only the most overt example of this hostility.

This riding roughshod over national cultures in the name of universalist Leninist ideology is most starkly evident in the regimes of Africa. The Marxist centralizing governments of Africa are descendants of the regimes of Western imperialism established in the late 19th century.

Britain, France, and Portugal marched into Africa and carved it up into provinces totally heedless and uncaring of the realities of the varied and highly diverse tribes which constituted the African polity. Many tribes, most of which hated each other's guts, and had nothing—neither culture, language, customs, nor tradition—in common, were coercively incorporated into "colonies" with arbitrary borders imposed by the imperial Western powers. In addition to this forced marriage, many of the artificial borders split tribal regions into two or more parts, so that tribesmen seasonally migrating into age-old occupied regions, found themselves stopped at the border and accused of being "illegal immigrants" or "aggressors."

The tragedy of modern Africa is that the imperial powers did not simply withdraw and allow the natural tribal formation to resume their original occupation of the continent. Instead, the coercive centralizing regimes of these so-called "nations" were turned over to the deracinated Marxist intellectuals educated in the imperial capitals, who soon became a parasitic bureaucratic class taxing and oppressing the peaceful peasantry who constitute the bulk of the actual producers in Africa.

Hostiles: the Global Democrats

The most significant negative reaction to the recent eruption of the nationalities question is that of our "global democracy" Establishment. Theirs is the most significant because they constitute the dominant opinion-molding force in American life. Essentially theirs is a far more sophisticated version of the reaction of the average American. The concerns and demands of nationalities are dismissed as narrow, selfish, parochial, and even dangerously hostile per se and aggressive toward other nationalities. Above all, they interfere with the most sanctified value in the global-democratic canon: "the democratic process," which inherently means "majority rule," albeit sometimes limited by the restraints of "human" or "minority" rights. Therefore, the ultimate curse levelled against nationalities and their demands is that they are perforce "undemocratic," and hence not suitable for the modern world.

Thus, there is a deeper reason than realpolitik for the seemingly strange coolness of the Bush administration toward the heroic national independence movement of the Lithuanians and the other Baltic nations. It's not just that the United States is supposed to sacrifice them on the altar of "saving Gorby." For there was unalloyed joy at the liberating of Officially Accredited Nations, such as Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia, from Soviet and Communist yokes. But the Baltic nations, after all, are different: they are "part" of the Soviet Union, and therefore their unilateral secession, against the will of the majority of the USSR, becomes an affront to "democracy," to "majority rule," and, last but far from least, to the unitary, centralizing nation-state that allegedly embodies the democratic ideal.

The fact that the United States had never recognized the forcible incorporation of the Baltic nations into the USSR in 1940, is now demonstrated to be a Cold War sham to win the votes of East European ethnics living in the United States. For when push comes to shove, how can little parts of a great nation be permitted to secede in opposition to the "democratic will" of the larger nation? Not only the Bush and Establishment coolness toward the Baltics, but also their palpable relief when Gorby sent troops into Azerbaijan, allegedly to stop Azeris and Armenians from killing each other, shows that far more is at stake here than helping Gorby against the Stalinists.

For the U.S. global democrats had gotten worried that Gorby might fail to carry out the alleged fundamental responsibility of a great modernizing nation: to use force and violence to settle disputes among its various regions and nationalities. That is, in fact, to maintain the unitary force of the central "imperial" power against the nationalities within its periphery.

The clinching argument of the global democrats in all this may be summed up as "after all, didn't Lincoln?" The most sanctified figure in American historiography is, by no accident, the Great Saint of centralizing "democracy" and the strong unitary

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nation-state: Abraham Lincoln. It is fascinating and no accident, and reveals the vital importance of history and of historical myth even in as amnesiac a nation as the United States, that a major reason that the neocons and their stooges have tried to read such paleocons as Mel Bradford and Tom Fleming out of the conservative movement is that they are highly critical of "honest Abe."

And so didn't Lincoln use force and violence, and on a massive scale, on behalf of the mystique of the sacred "Union," to prevent the South from seceding? Indeed he did, and on the foundation of mass murder and oppression, Lincoln crushed the South and outlawed the very notion of secession (based on the highly plausible ground that since the separate States voluntarily entered the Union they should also be allowed to leave).

But not only that: for Lincoln created the monstrous unitary nation-State from which individual and local liberties have never recovered: e.g. the triumph of an all-powerful federal judiciary, Supreme Court, and national army; the overriding of the ancient Anglo-Saxon and libertarian right of habeas corpus by jailing dissidents against the war without trial; the establishment of martial rule; the suppression of freedom of the press; and the largely permanent establishment of conscription, the income tax, the pietist "sin" taxes against liquor and tobacco, the corrupt and cartelizing "partnership of government and industry" constituting massive land subsidies to transcontinental railroads and the protective tariff; the establishment of fiat money inflation through the greenbacks and getting off the gold standard; and the nationalization of the banking system through the national Banking Acts of 1863 and 1864.

It is particularly fascinating that many conservative defenders of Lithuania and the other Baltic nations, try themselves to preserve the Lincoln myth and the general U.S. hostility to secession. They argue that since the Baltic states were forcibly incorporated by Stalin in 1940, they at least should be allowed to secede without the punishment of Lincoln-style repression!

Let us set aside the fact that most of the other incorporations of nations into the Soviet Union were just as compulsory albeit more venerable: e.g. the Ukraine, Armenia, or Georgia in the early days of the Bolshevik Revolution. Let us instead cut to the heart of the democratic political theory that is involved in the pervasive hostility to secession. For democratic theory, including the theory of most "minarchist" laissez-faire libertarians, holds that government, whether broadly social-democratic or confined to police, defense, and the judiciary, should be chosen by majority rule in free election. Minority secession movements are accused of violating democratic majority rule. But the crucial and always unanswered question is: democratic rule over what geographical area?

Let us put the problem another way: minarchist or democratic theory says that the State should have a monopoly of force in its territorial area. Let us agree for the sake of argument. But then the big unasked, and unanswered, question arises: what should be the territorial area? To paraphrase a favorite gambit of Ayn Rand's, the near-universal response is: Blankout!

Nationalities secessionists are implicitly challenging this pervasive blankout as a serious response to their concerns. So far, whether under Lincoln or, to a much lesser extent under Gorby, their crucial question has been met only by violence and force majeure: by the unquestioned mystique of might-makes-right and the coercive unitary nation-state. But the inner logic of that mystique, and the basic logic of minarchist political theory, is at once simple and terrifying: unitary world "democratic" government. The minarchist argument against anarcho-capitalist libertarians is that there must be a single, overriding governmental agency with a monopoly force to settle disputes by coercion. OK, but in that case and by the very same logic shouldn't nation-States be replaced by a one-world monopoly government? Shouldn't a unitary world government replace what has been properly termed our existing "international anarchy"?

Minarchist libertarians and conservatives balk at the inner logic of world government for obvious reasons: for they fear correctly that world taxation and world socialization would totally and irreversibly suppress the liberty and property of Americans. But they remain trapped in the logic of their own position. Left-liberals, on the other hand, are happy to embrace this logic precisely because of this expected outcome. Even the democratic Establishment, however, hesitates at embracing the ultimate logical end of a single world democratic state, at least until they can be assured of controlling that monstrous entity.

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Short of the world State of their dreams, how does our global democratic Establishment deal with the crucial problem of where State boundaries should be? By sanctifying whatever State boundaries happen to exist at the time. Sanctifying status quo boundaries has been the axiom of the foreign policy of every U.S. administration since Woodrow Wilson, and of the League of Nations and its successor the United Nations, all based on the incoherent and disastrous concept of "collective security against aggression." It was that concept that underlay U.S. intervention in World Wars I and II, and in the Korean War: first we determine (often incorrectly) which is the "aggressor state," and then all nation-States are supposed to band together to combat, repel, and punish that aggression.

The theoretical analogue of such a concert against "aggression" is held to be combatting criminal action against individuals. A robs or murders B; the local police, appointed defenders of the rights of person and property, leap to the defense of B and act to apprehend and punish A. In the same way, "peace-loving" nations are supposed to band together against "aggressor" nations or States. Hence, Harry Truman's otherwise mystifying insistence that the U.S. war against North Korea was not a war at all but a "police action."

The deep flaw in all this is that when A robs or murders B, there is a general agreement that A is in the wrong, and that he has indeed aggressed against the person and just property rights of B. But when State A aggresses against the border of State B, often claiming that the border is unjust and the result of a previous aggression against country A decades before, how can we say a priori that State A is the aggressor and that we must dismiss its defense out of hand? Who says, and on what principle, that State B has the same moral right to all of its existing territory as individual B has to his life and property? And how can the two aggressions be equated when our global democrats refuse to come up with any principles or criteria whatsoever: except the unsatisfactory and absurd call for a world State or blind reliance upon the boundary status quo at any given moment?

Just Boundaries and National Self-Determination

What, then, is the answer? What national boundaries can be considered as just? In the first place, it must be recognized that there are no just national boundaries per se; that real justice can only be founded on the property rights of individuals. If fifty people decided voluntarily to set up an organization for common services or self-defense of their persons and properties in a certain geographical area, then the boundaries of that association, based on the just property rights of the members, will also be just.

National boundaries are only just insofar as they are based on voluntary consent and the property rights of their members or citizens. Just national boundaries are, then, at best derivative and not primary. How much more is this true of existing State boundaries which are, in greater or lesser degree, based on coercive expropriation of private property, or on a mixture of that with voluntary consent! In practice, the way to have such national boundaries as just as possible is to preserve and cherish the right of secession, the right of different regions, groups, or ethnic nationalities to get the blazes out of the larger entity, to set up their own independent nation. Only by boldly asserting the right of secession can the concept of national self-determination be anything more than a sham and a hoax.

But wasn't the Wilsonian attempt to impose national self-determination and draw the map of Europe a disaster? And how! But the disaster was inevitable even assuming (incorrectly) good will on the part of Wilson and the Allies and ignoring the fact that national self-determination was a mask for their imperial ambitions. For by its nature, national self-determination cannot be imposed from without, by a foreign government entity, be it the United States or some world League.

The whole point of national self-determination is to get top-down coercive power out of the picture and, for the use of force to devolve from the larger entity to more genuine natural and voluntary national entities. In short, to devolve power from the top downward. Imposing national self-determination from the outside makes matters worse and more coercive than ever. Moreover, getting the U.S. or other governments involved in every ethnic conflict throughout the globe maximizes, rather than minimizes, coercion, conflict, war, and mass murder. It drags the United States, as the great isolationist

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scholar Charles A. Beard once put it, into "perpetual war for perpetual peace."

Referring back to political theory, since the nation-state has a monopoly of force in its territorial area, the one thing it must not do is ever try to exercise its force beyond its area, where it has no monopoly, because then a relatively peaceful "international anarchy" (where each State confines its power to its own geographical boundary) is replaced by an international Hobbesian chaos of war of all (governments) against all. In short, given the existence of nation-States, they should (a) never exercise their power beyond their territorial area (a foreign policy of "isolationism"), and (b) maintain the right of secession of groups or entities within their territorial area.

National self-determination must remain a moral principle and a beacon-light for all nations.

The right of secession, if fearlessly upheld, implies also the right of one or more villages to secede even from its own ethnic nation, or, even, as Ludwig von Mises affirmed in his *Nation, State, and Economy*, the right of secession by each individual.

If one deep flaw in the Wilsonian enterprise was its imposition of national self-determination from the outside, another was his total botch of redrawing the European map. It is difficult to believe that they could have done a worse job if the Versailles rulers had blindfolded themselves and put pins arbitrarily in a map of Europe to create new nations.

Instead of self-determination for each nation, three officially designated Good Guy peoples (Poles, Czechs, and Serbs) were made masters over other nationalities who had hated their guts for centuries, often with good reason. That is, these three favored nationalities were not simply given ethnic national independence; instead, their boundaries were arbitrarily swollen so as to dominate other peoples officially designated as Bad Guys (or at best Who Cares Guys): the Poles ruling over Germans, Lithuanians (in the Lithuanian city of Vilnius/Vilna), Byelorussians, and Ukrainians; the Czechs ruling over Slovaks and Ukrainians (called "Carpatho-Ruthenians"); and the Serbs tyrannizing over Croats, Slovenes, Albanians, Hungarians, and Macedonians, in a geographical abortion called "Yugoslavia" (now at last in the process of falling apart).

In addition, the Romanians were aggrandized at the expense of the Hungarians and Bulgarians. These three (or four if we include Romania) lopsided countries were also given the absurd and impossible task by the U.S. and the Western allies of keeping down permanently the two neighboring great "revisionist" powers and losers at Versailles: Germany and Russia. This imposed task led straight to World War II.

In short, national self-determination must remain a moral principle and a beacon-light for all nations, and not be something to be imposed by outside governmental coercion.

Partition and Referendum

One practical way of implementing self-determination and the right of secession is the concept of a partition referendum in which each village or parish votes to decide whether to remain inside the existing national entity or to secede or join another such nation. The much disputed area of Nagorno-Karabakh, for example, would undoubtedly vote overwhelmingly to leave the hated Azerbaijan Republic and join Armenia. But what of the fact that Nagorno-Karabakh is not contiguous with greater Armenia, that there is a sliver of ethnically Azeri land in between? But surely good will on both sides (which of course is obviously non-existent at this point) could permit a free zone or free entry across that zone. Not only an airpath, but also a road corridor proved to be viable for decades after the explosive Berlin crisis.

Partition referenda were used fitfully after World War I; the most renowned case was the separation of Northern Ireland from the rest of the country. Unfortunately, the British deliberately botched the partition vote, and a promised referendum for a second partition was never carried out by the British government. As a result, a large amount of Catholic territory in the north was forcibly incorporated into the Protestant state, and the existence of that Catholic minority, which undoubtedly would vote to join the South, has been responsible for the tragic

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and unending violence and bloodshed ever since. In short, a genuine partition based on referenda, would probably lop off from Northern Ireland the territories of counties Tyrone and Fermanagh (including the city of Derry) and South Down. Essentially, Northern Ireland would be much reduced in land area, and left with a belt around Belfast and county Antrim. The only substantial Catholic minority would then be in the Catholic section of Belfast.

One criticism of partition by referendum is that parishes and villages are often mixed, so that there could not be a precise separation of the nationalities. In the vexed region of Transylvania, for example, Hungarian and Romanian villages are intermixed in the same region. No doubt; no one ever said that such referenda would provide a panacea. But the point is that at least the degree of voluntary choice would be enlarged and the amount of social and ethnic conflict minimized, and not much more can be achieved. (Transylvania, by the way, is largely Hungarian, especially the northern part, and the wrong done to Hungary after World War I should be rectified.)

Lop off from Northern Ireland the territories of counties Tyrone and Fermanagh (including the city of Derry) and South Down.

There is one criticism of the referendum approach that is far more cogent and troublesome. The Azeri claim to Nagorno-Karabakh rests on the thesis that, while the Armenians are now admittedly in the overwhelming majority, the region was, centuries ago, a center of Azeri culture. This claim from history may properly be dismissed as the dead hand of the past ruling the living, perhaps with the proviso that ancient Azeri shrines be protected under Azeri care.

But more troubling is, say, the current situation in Estonia and Latvia, where the Soviets deliberately tried to swamp and destroy native culture and ethnic nationalism by shipping in a large number of Russians after World War II to work in the factories. In Latvia, the Russian minority is only slightly under 50%. Here, I believe, the recency of this migration and its political nature tip the scales in favor of maintaining native nationalism. In fact, libertarians believe that everyone has the natural right to self-ownership and ownership of property, but that there is no such thing as a natural "right" to vote. Here, it would make sense not to allow Russians to vote in Latvia and Estonia, to treat them as guests or immigrants of indefinite duration, but not with the voting privileges of citizenship.

The Hostiles: The Modal Libertarians

Libertarians are, by and large, as fiercely opposed to ethnic nationalism as the global democrats, but for very different reasons. Libertarians are generally what might be called simplistic and "vulgar" individualists. A typical critique would run as follows: "There is no nation; there are only individuals. The nation is a collectivist and therefore pernicious concept. The concept of 'national self-determination' is fallacious, since only the individual has a 'self.' Since the nation and the State are both collective concepts, both are pernicious and should be combatted."

The linguistic complaint may be dismissed quickly. Yes, of course, there is no national "self;" we are using "self-determination" as a metaphor, and no one really thinks of a nation as an actual living entity with its own "self."

More seriously, we must not fall into a nihilist trap. While only individuals exist, individuals do not exist as isolated and hermetically sealed atoms. Statists traditionally charge libertarians and individualists with being "atomistic individualists," and the charge, one hopes, has always been incorrect and misconceived. Individuals may be the only reality, but they influence each other, past and present, and all individuals grow up in a common culture and language. (This does not imply that they may not, as adults, rebel and challenge and exchange that culture for another.)

While the State is a pernicious and coercive collectivist concept, the "nation" may be and generally is voluntary. The nation properly refers, not to the State, but to the entire web of culture, values, traditions, religion, and language in which the individuals of a society are raised. It is almost embarrassingly banal to emphasize that point, but apparently many liber-

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tarians aggressively overlook the obvious. Let us never forget the great libertarian Randolph Bourne's analysis of the crucial distinction between "the nation" (the land, the culture, the terrain, the people) and "the State" (the coercive apparatus of bureaucrats and politicians), and of his important conclusion that one may be a true patriot of one's nation or country while —and even for that very reason—opposing the State that rules over it.

In addition, the libertarian, especially of the anarcho-capitalist wing, asserts that it makes no difference where the boundaries are, since in a perfect world all institutions and land areas would be private and there would be no national boundaries. Fine, but in the meantime, in the real world, in which language should the government courts hold their proceedings? What should be the language of the signs on the government streets? Or the language of the government schools? In the real world, then, national self-determination is a vitally important matter on which libertarians should properly take sides.

Finally, nationalism has its disadvantages for liberty, but also has its strengths, and libertarians should try to help tip it in the latter direction. If we were residents of Yugoslavia, for example, we should be agitating in favor of the right to secede from that swollen and misbegotten State of Croatia and Slovenia (that is, favoring their current nationalist movements), while opposing the desire of the Serb demagogue Slobadan Milosevich to cling to Serb domination over the Albanians in Kosovo or over the Hungarians in the Vojvodina (that is, opposing Great Serbian nationalism). There is, in short, national liberation (good) versus national "imperialism" over other peoples (bad). Once get over simplistic individualism, and this distinction should not be difficult to grasp. •

Our Pro-Death Culture

by the Old Curmudgeon

I don't care much for shrinks, especially the psychoanalytic branch of the Church. But the late Bruno Bettelheim will be missed as a man of substance—especially for his tough-minded and exhilarating defense of fairy-stories against the gringes of Left-Puritanism who would deprive children of their world of fantasy and of wonder on behalf of a bowdlerized and sanitized Dick-and-Jane culture.

It was therefore particularly sad to read about the aged Bettelheim's recent suicide, covered in detail by the press, especially in a typically interesting in-depth study in the *L.A. Times*. But questions and comments come to mind that escaped the purview of the reporters. For example: surrounded by long-term friends who are shrinks, and by daughters who are shrinks, how come that none of these distinguished psychologists saw any signs of Bettelheim's loneliness and depression that would lead to suicide? More to the point: why did his shrink daughters break with him and refuse to see him any longer? And what does this say about their humanity, or about the humanity of shrinks in general?

The *L.A. Times* struck an especially grisly note. It reported that when Bettelheim moved from the West Coast to a Washington, D.C.-area rest home, a cocktail party welcoming him was held, at which one young lady, noting that the guest of honor was depressed, went over to him and suggested that he get in touch with the Hemlock Society. "Do you know the Hemlock Society?" "Do you know the Euthanasia Society?" Etc. It turns out that Bettelheim was a founder of the Hemlock group, but the thing that should give us pause is: what kind of rotten and debased culture do we have where so many people—shrinks, welfare workers, do-gooders in general, are anxious and eager to help spirit people to their death?

I wish to make it clear: as a libertarian I believe in the absolute legal right of a person to commit suicide, and even the absolute right of do-gooders to offer to help in this project. But as a civilized man, I find helping others to their death absolutely odious and reprehensible. Surely it is the task of shrinks, relatives, friends, and general do-gooders to help people live, to try to live longer and fuller lives, and not to speed them on their way to the grave. When I read this account of poor Bettelheim at the cocktail party, I could think of nothing more apt than the image of a smiling, leering Bela Lugosi-type, taking his victim's hand, and saying, "Come, my dear, let me help you die." Any society where such contract-killers flourish (even among consensual adults) is a society that is rapidly going to Hell in a handbasket. It is high time to assert

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the supreme value of human life, as against death.

It all started some years ago, I remember, with a repellent physician named Dr. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, who started going on television preaching a pro-death line. By now you've heard it all many times—how foolishly optimistic Americans are, how pro-life and progress, how they neglect the importance of death, how Americans should join other, wiser cultures in honoring and even glorifying death, etc. Since then, we've been succumbing to more and more of this rot. Twenty years ago, one would have been considered absurdly obvious in raising the banner of Life, Not Death. Now, however, such an act has become a moral necessity.

Can you imagine how much fun C.S. Lewis would have had with all this? In a new edition of *Screwtape Letters*, Screwtape might write to his diabolic agents, "First, we preach to people about the importance and greatness of death. Then, we offer to help them along..."

* * * * *

The above was written before the dramatic emergence of "Dr. Death" Jack Kevorkian and his "Suicide Machine." Dr. Death makes our discussion all the more relevant. Physicians, like shrinks, are supposed to help people live not die. Dr. Death is not only violating the canons of official medical ethics. For if medicine is not grounded firmly on a life rather than a death ethic, we are far down the slippery slope to the notorious Dr. Mengele and his "mad scientist" experiments in the name of advancing scientific knowledge. Pat Buchanan, in his discussion of this issue, reports that in Holland, hospitals are already going over the voluntary "Living Will" line and regularly terminating the lives of elderly patients at the physicians' own discretion, i.e. committing murder. And in Holland, there are no protests.

We are reminded of such science fiction movies as "Logan's Run," where all people are automatically killed on their 30th birthday, in the name of being "translated into a higher immortal state," and "Soylent Green," where old people are systematically checked into a luxurious resort hotel from which they can never emerge—except as recyclable organic material to feed the still-living population. But in these films the situation is supposed to be grisly and monstrously evil. Nowadays, however, there are pro-death signs everywhere in our culture.

There are pro-death signs everywhere in our culture.

In two current daytime TV soaps, similar issues are dramatically portrayed with an evident pro-death bias. In "As the World Turns," young incurably ill Dr. Casey Perretti urges his stepdaughter Margo to pull the plug just before he goes into a coma. She does so, even though as a policewomam she knows she is violating the law as well as her oath. It is clear that the people who react in horror at her decision are either being irrational (the bereaved widow, her mother), rigid sticklers for the law (her husband the district attorney), and oldsters who are imprisoned by the old pro-life culture (the doctor's mother). On the other hand, Margo's friend and young female shrink (and therefore the epitome of Modern Enlightenment) Frannie says she would have probably done the same. But at least Margo agonizes over her decision.

On "The Bold and the Beautiful," the situation is different, but young publisher Caroline Spencer, suffering from an unnamed imminently terminal ailment, walks around with an insufferable serene smile (also looking no worse for wear and experiencing no pain), manipulating other people like mad with her illness as her excuse, and, worst of all, dispensing a stream of highly irritating pro-death philosophic pronouncements, e.g., that dying gives you unique wisdom to see reality deeply; and that death is a value-free event: "Death is simply an experience, no better or worse than any other." Pretty soon, the sensible viewer is ready himself to take steps to put Caroline out of her happiness.

The question of a pro-life ethic should not be limited, as it virtually is today, to the vexed abortion issue. However we feel about the life of fetuses, it seems to me clear that we should be firm as a rock on the question of life for the "post-born." And yet we're not. And why is it that, even without taking a poll or reading any libertarian views on this is-

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sue, I have a strong hunch that our old friend, the Modal Libertarian, is all in favor of Dr. Death?

What has happened to our culture, and why are we in our present fix? Could it be the result of the general abandonment of Christianity and the Christian ethic? Or could it be the result of the American mania for perfect beauty and fitness that southern California has foisted upon us? And that therefore, if we are no longer twenty-five and a "perfect 10" with an optimal cholesterol level, we may as well pack it in? So that the same Enlightened People who brought us massive systemic guilt in the wake of a promised hedonism, have also brought us death in the name of perfect health and beauty? •

— M.N.R.

The Flag Flap

by M.N.R.

There are many curious aspects to the latest flag fracas. There is the absurdity of the proposed change in our basic constitutional framework by treating such minor specifics as a flag law. There is the proposal to outlaw "desecration" of the American flag. "Desecration" means "to divest of a sacred character or office." Is the American flag, battle emblem of the U.S. government, supposed to be "sacred"? Are we to make a religion of statolatry? What sort of grotesque religion is that?

Civil libertarians have long placed their greatest stress on a sharp difference between "speech" and "action," and the claim that the First Amendment covers only speech and not actions (except, of course, for the definite action of printing and distribution of a pamphlet or book, which would come under the free press clause of the First Amendment.) But, as the flag amendment advocates point out, what kind of "speech" is burning a flag? Isn't that most emphatically an action—and one that cannot come under the free press rubric? The fallback position of the civil libertarians, as per the majority decisions in the flag cases by Mr. Justice Brennan, is that flag burning is "symbolic" speech, and therefore, although an action, comes under the free speech protection.

But "symbolic speech" is just about as inane as the "desecration" doctrine of the flag-law advocates. The speech/action distinction now disappears altogether, and every action can be excused and protected on the ground that it constitutes "symbolic speech." Suppose, for example, that I were a white racist, and decided to get a gun and shoot a few blacks. But then I could say, that's OK because that's only "symbolic speech," and political symbolic speech at that, because I'm trying to make a political argument against our current pro-black legislation.

Anyone who considers such an argument far-fetched should ponder a recent decision by a dotty leftist New York judge to the effect that it is "unconstitutional" for the New York subway authorities to toss beggars out of the subway stations. The jurist's argument held that begging is "symbolic speech," an expressive argument for more help to the poor. Fortunately, this argument was overturned on appeal, but still "symbolic arguers" are everywhere in New York, clogging streets, airports, and bus terminals.

There is no way, then, that flag laws can be declared unconstitutional as violations of the First Amendment. The problem with flag laws has nothing to do with free speech, and civil libertarians have got caught in their own trap because they do in fact try to separate speech and action, a separation that is artificial and cannot long be maintained.

As in the case of all dilemmas caused by the free speech doctrine, the entire problem can be resolved by focusing, not on a high-sounding but untenable right to freedom of speech, but on the natural and integral right to private property and its freedom of use. As even famed First Amendment absolutist Justice Hugo Black pointed out, no one has the free-speech right to burst into your room and harangue you about politics. "The right to freedom of speech" really means the right to hire a hall and expound your views; the "right to freedom of press" (where, as we have seen, speech and action clearly cannot be separated) means the right to print a pamphlet and sell it. In short, free speech or free press rights are a subset, albeit an important one, of the rights of private property: the right to hire, to own, to sell.

Keeping our eye on property rights, the entire flag question is resolved easily and instantly. Everyone has the right to buy (or weave) and therefore own a piece of cloth in the shape and design of an American flag (or in any other design) and to do with it what he will: fly it, burn it, defile it, bury it, put it in the closet, wear it, etc. Flag laws are unjustifiable laws in violation of the rights of private property. (Constitutionally, there are many clauses in the

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Constitution from which private property rights can be derived.)

On the other hand, no one has the right to come up and burn your flag, or someone else's. That should be illegal, not because a flag is being burned, but because the arsonist is burning your property without your permission. He is violating your property rights.

Note the way in which the focus on property rights solves all recondite issues. Perhaps conservatives, who proclaim themselves defenders of property rights, will be moved to reconsider their support of its invasion. On the other hand, perhaps liberals, scorners of property rights, might be moved to consider that cleaving to them may be the only way, in the long run, to insure freedom of speech and press. •

World Government

by Llewellyn H. Rockwell

In an interventionist economy like ours, the political talk is inevitably of the public interest, the common good, the national security. But the real issues are always cash and control. In analyzing any government action, therefore, we should ask who's getting the money and the power, and at whose expense.

Such analysis is painted as disreputable by the government and its kept intellectuals in the media and the universities (and—typically—by the Modal Libertarian). But it is the only way to see through the smokescreen that is generated by Washington.

In an intriguing 1980 article published in *Playboy*, for example, Robert Scheer noted that Ronald Reagan was "viewed with suspicion by the elite Northeastern wing of the Republican Party." They thought he might "actually believe in some of his proposals for dismantling the federal government, which, after all, does serve the interests of big corporations."

Reagan's talk about the gold standard was "viewed as primitive" by the people associated with "David Rockefeller's Chase Manhattan Bank." Also worried were the "managers of multinational corporations" who have "done quite well" in the present system.

Unlike Jimmy Carter, Walter Mondale, or George Bush, Reagan had never been a member of the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) or the Trilateral Commission (TC).

"Prior to the New Hampshire primary," wrote Scheer, "David Rockefeller convened a secret meeting" to stop "Reagan by supporting Bush and, failing that, getting Gerald Ford into the race." Upon hearing of the meeting, Reagan asked an aide: "What have they got against me? I support big oil, I support big business, why don't they trust me?" To ensure that trust, he appointed William Casey, a senior member of the CFR, as his campaign director.

Casey, a CIA operative and Wall Street lawyer who later headed the CIA for Reagan, worried especially about one Reagan answer to a reporter's question: the Carter administration, Reagan said, "beginning with the President and Vice-President," has had about "19 of its top appointees" from "the Trilateral Commission," which is "devoted to international banking, multinational corporations, and so forth."

Reagan added that no "administration of the U.S. government should have the top 19 positions filled by people from any one group or organization representing one viewpoint." He added: "I would go in a different direction."

But a few months later, under Casey's direction, Reagan had brought in a team of advisors from the CFR and the TC, and picked the ultimate Rockefeller Republican, George Bush -- high-level member of the TC and CFR, as his running mate. In his administration, he appointed such Trilateralists as Howard Baker, Alan Greenspan, and even hosted a meeting of the TC in the White House. Reagan would never have to ask again: "what do they have against me?"

Rockefeller, Morgan, and the CFR

A free market benefits consumers and the economy—but not necessarily particular business interests. However, as John D. Rockefeller, Sr., and his Standard Oil associates learned early on, an interventionist government can provide special privileges for favored corporations at the expense of competitors and consumers.

At first the Rockefeller family concentrated on America, but as it soon began to operate overseas (it now has interests in 125 countries), it also sought to influence U.S. foreign policy. One key means to this end is the Council on Foreign Relations.

Created after World War I by J.P. Morgan and his associ-

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ates, the CFR is a crucial part of that Establishment whose members dominate so much of high finance, elite universities, big foundations, national media, and economic and foreign policy.

From William McKinley through Franklin Roosevelt, government policy was a mighty battle ground for the Rockefeller and the Morgan interests. For example, Teddy Roosevelt—who was allied closely with the Morgan interests—had a doctrine of good trusts and bad trusts, the latter of which should be broken up by the government.

But upon examination, it's easy to see that Roosevelt was motivated by something other than antitrust theory. The good trusts—such as U.S. Steel—were Morgan owned, while the bad ones—like Standard Oil—were Rockefeller owned, and TR succeeded in breaking up Standard Oil.

Sometimes both forces agreed, as on the monstrous scheming of the U.S. into World War I, which destroyed Imperial Germany and Tsarist Russia, opening the way for Hitler and Lenin. But mostly they fought.

Despite the breakup of Standard Oil, the Rockefellers gradually won more battles, especially as the railroads—the basis of the Morgan empire—became less important economically. Finally, FDR—who was associated with the Rockefeller branch of the Roosevelts—used the New Deal and especially its SEC reforms to defeat the Morgans, and they eventually became simply junior partners in a Rockefeller-dominated Establishment, an important part of which was the CFR.

As John F. Campbell put it in *New York* magazine in 1971: "Practically every lawyer, banker, professor, general, journalist, and bureaucrat who has had any influence on the foreign policy of the last six Presidents—from Franklin Roosevelt to Richard Nixon—has spent some time" in the CFR headquarters in New York. The members have "been pretty much running things in this country for the last 25 years," and they "know it."

The CFR had said in 1919 that it would be a "Board of Invention" to "cooperate with government and all existing international agencies to bring them into constructive accord." Constructive from the standpoint of interests like the Morgans and the Rockefellers, however. And it was very effective. It contrived FDR's domestic fascism and the entry of the U.S. into World War II, and planned such postwar internationalist schemes as the Marshall Plan, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund—all of which benefited the power elite.

U.S. News & World Report says that after World War I, "it was clear that the nation needed cosmopolitan statesmen who could help guide America into the age of global politics. And "well-educated bluebloods like W. Averell Harriman" fit the bill.

"Early internationalists at a time when the United States was, for the first time, looking beyond its own parochial interests, a network of like-minded men—many of them lifelong friends and colleagues—surfaced in the years leading up to World War II, stayed on through the conflagration, and became the architects of the postwar period. Their names—Harriman, John J. McCloy, Robert A. Lovett, James Forrestal—became internationally famous."

These were "the men who planned the reconstruction of Germany and Japan, who founded the United Nations and established the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank—and mulled it all over at the Council on Foreign Relations even when they held no formal government jobs." After one meeting at the CFR, "that celebrated Old Boy McCloy turned to the group" and asked "'Which one of us is going to tell" Secretary of State Dean Acheson "what we decided?'"

The *Wall Street Journal* reported Ambassador Paul H. Nitze's March 1990 remarks about the new CFR building in Washington, D.C.: in the past, "New York was not only the financial, industrial, and press capital of the country," it was its "policy center as well." The White House and the State Department might conduct diplomacy, "but policy was made by serious people, men with a longer view, i.e. the great men of finance and their advisors." But now, the "centrality of Washington to the relationship has increased."

But the CFR, no matter where its buildings were located, came to have a drawback from an Establishment perspective. It was solely a U.S. group. But David Rockefeller remedied that in 1973 when he established the Trilateral Commission.

Rockefeller and the Trilateral Commission

"David Rockefeller is the most conspicuous representative today of the ruling class," said Bill

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Moyers, "that multinational fraternity of men who shape the global economy."

Rockefeller founded the TC as an alliance of the ruling elites of North America, Western Europe, and Japan (which is where the "Tri" in Trilateral comes from). The members include about 300 politicians, bankers, businessmen, and academics from the three geographic areas.

"The public and leaders of most countries," said a TC report in 1977, "continue to live in a mental universe which no longer exists—a world of separate nations—and have great difficulties thinking in terms of global perspective and interdependence." The idea of a "separation between the political and economic realm is obsolete: issues related to economics are at the heart of modern politics."

The TC selected the then-obscure Jimmy Carter as a member, and promoted him for president. He in turn filled his administration with Trilateralist appointees, including Zbigniew Brzezinski as national security advisor.

A Commission document written by Brzezinski, its first executive director, said that "every effective international system requires a custodian." Today's must be a "transnational elite composed of international businessmen, scholars, and public officials" unhampered by "national concerns."

Samuel Huntington of Harvard—a Trilateralist academic now affiliated with the neoconservatives—noted in another TC publication that "Truman had been able to govern the country with the cooperation of a small number of Wall Street lawyers and bankers." But this is no longer possible, since the people now question the "legitimacy of hierarchy, coercion, discipline, secrecy, and deception," the "attributes of the process of government." Unfortunately, the American people "no longer felt the compulsion to obey" those of "superior rank."

George Bush is, of course, a leading member of the Establishment. His father was Prescott Bush, a wealthy Wall Street investment banker and later a Senator from Connecticut, who helped steal the 1952 Republican presidential nomination from Sen. Bob Taft. The Rockefeller family helped fund George Bush's 1980 and 1988 presidential efforts. As Rockefeller said in 1979, "He's my man!"

But because the TC and the CFR were controversial in conservative circles, to prepare for his 1988 campaign, Bush ostensibly resigned from the CFR and the TC. However, as Rockefeller told the *Washington Post*, Bush "has since spoken to the Council and the Trilateral and has been fully supportive."

Bush was his candidate, said Rockefeller, because he was in a "better position than anyone else to pull together the people in the country who believe that we are in fact living in One World and have to act that way."

Two of the TC members who help Bush "act that way" are Lawrence S. Eagleburger, number two man in the State Department, and Brent Scowcroft, national security advisor. Before Bush was elected, they got rich at Kissinger Associates—where each made about a million dollars a year supplying insider information to multinational firms.

In an interview with the *Washington Post*, Scowcroft—who was described by Kissinger, who ought to know, as "one of those rare men whose real ambition is to serve their country selflessly"— was asked if he were "one of the Wise Men, a member of the mysterious brotherhood that we call 'the Establishment'"?

"Yeah, I think so," answered Scowcroft, amazing the reporter, since "no member of the Establishment" is supposed to "admit either the existence of an Establishment or his membership in it."

Zbigniew Brzezinski was also candid at a recent editorial luncheon at the *Washington Times*. "Zbig," said editor Arnaud de Borchgrave, "I've been getting a lot of flack because I belong to the Council on Foreign Relations. People think it's some sort of conspiracy. I imagine you get the same crazy letters about your membership in the Trilateral. Why don't you explain to us exactly what the Commission is."

"Well, Arnaud," answered Brzezinski in his thick Polish accent, "it brings together the elites of the industrialized world to try to plan the future." Exactly.

A D.C. conservative, after being praised by TC columnist David Broder in the *The Washington Post* (always a bad sign), was invited to New York by David Rockefeller. "What do conservatives think of me?" was the Rock's first question. "They think you're pulling strings to make the government do your bidding," said the D.C. type, his tone and facial expression indicating that he, of course, thought this was ridicu-

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lous. "They're right!" Rockefeller answered with a laugh.

One Money, One World

Note that the first priority in facilitating German reunification has been to make the West German mark the common currency. As a *Washington Post* editorial put it: "The real point is that a common currency means one common country, and all else is details to be filled in later." That's why the Establishment is pushing for a world currency.

The Trilateralist World Policy Institute in Washington, D.C., recently filled in some of the details in an important article by Walter Russell Mead: "An international system" requires globalist intervention, he said. "Progress" is "almost inconceivable without an expansion in the numbers of international economic organizations, an extension of their mandates, and a proportionate increase in their resources."

Calling for "global Keynesianism," Mead says that it would be an improvement upon the current system of "coordinated policies by the trilateral powers" because it would be more "global."

Along with global trade and fiscal bureaucracies, he wants a global central bank and a world currency, which he calls the "bancor," Keynes's old term. "The International Bank would generate new bancors and distribute them where they would do good." Eventually, the bancor would "replace" the dollar, the yen, and the coming European currency as "the preferred unit of account and settlement in international transactions."

"Nations would no longer take turns as the locomotive of world growth, but we would all pay a share of the international locomotive's fuel bill and we would all ride in the train." The *New York Times* calls this "persuasive." But the banksters and politicians would be driving the train, and the American taxpayer would be strapped to the tracks.

Another Trilateralist outfit in D.C. is the Institute for International Economics (IIE), whose board even includes David Rockefeller himself. It is, says *Business Week*, "Washington's most influential think tank on the hot issues of world economics."

The day after TC'er Bush won the White House, IIE published for his administration *America in the World Economy: A Strategy for the 1990s* by C. Fred Bergsten.

Bergsten, the head of IIE, is a top Trilateral economist and former high government official under Carter. Bergsten says that the "the globalization of markets has outrun the ability of governments to cope." His answer? World government.

The TC wants to merge the U.S., Japan, and Europe into a world state.

The key ingredient is a world central bank and currency, starting with the "creation of a European central bank and a common currency," plus a big increase in government spending; new consumption taxes; and $200 billion a year more in foreign aid from the West to the "15 heavily indebted countries of the Third World."

In the appropriate year of 1984, Richard Cooper described in *Foreign Affairs*, the journal of the CFR, "A Monetary System for the Future." Cooper—professor of international economics at Yale; former high government official; and member of the CFR and the TC—also urged "the creation of a common currency for all the industrial countries, with a common monetary policy and a joint Bank of Issue to determine that monetary policy."

The world, he said, needs "a single monetary policy, and a single authority issuing the currency and directing the monetary policy." And the first step is for "the United States, Japan, and the members of the European Community to unite."

The World Central Bank

In a few years, if all goes according to plan, three central banks and their respective currencies will dominate the world economy: the Federal Reserve and the dollar, the European central bank and the ecu, and the Bank of Japan and the yen. That's when the plan to merge all three to into one world central bank to issue a single world currency will go into high gear. The real goal of the TC goes beyond this, of course. It wants to merge the U.S., Japan, and Europe into a world state.

Edouard Balladur, finance minister of France, proposed in the *WSJ* in 1988 "that the interna-

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tional community entrust a small group of distinguished people of unquestionable moral authority— who have proven their economic, monetary and financial competence—with the task of lighting the way" to "a world order accepted by all and binding on all." Added TC member and former West German chancellor Helmut Schmidt: "Nobody is in charge, and this is very dangerous."

Ever since John Maynard Keynes and Communist Harry Dexter White schemed it at the post-World War II Bretton Woods monetary conference, a world central bank—under the firm control of the power elite—has been a statist dream. Such a bank could coordinate worldwide inflation to benefit the Establishment and serve as a way-station on the road to world government.

In addition to using financial means to bring about world government, the Establishment is touting environmentalism as a justification. Trilateralist Elliot L. Richardson, writing in *The New York Times*, says we need "an institutional mechanism to develop, institute, and enforce regulations across national boundaries." This "global Environmental Protection Agency" run like "the United Nations General Assembly" should be able to levy taxes directly on us.

The American Answer

Ever since Woodrow Wilson, the Establishment has been infected with the idea of world government. As the European Community melds in 1992 and sets up a continent-wide IRS and central bank, the Trilateralist vision comes closer to achievement.

This means we must be even more adamant about cutting governmental, but not economic, ties to Europe and Japan, and reestablishing a pro-American foreign policy, which was what George Washington was talking about when he urged peaceful trade with all who wanted it but no foreign interventions or entangling alliances.

As John Quincy Adams said: America should send "her benedictions, and her prayers" to "wherever the standard of freedom has been or shall be unfurled." But "she goes not abroad in search of monsters to destroy" lest she be entangled "beyond the power of extrication, in all the wars of interest and intrigue, of individual avarice, envy and ambition, which assume the colors and usurp the standard of freedom. The fundamental maxim of our policy would insensibly change from liberty to force." America "might become the dictatress of the world. She would no longer be the ruler of her own spirit."

City hall is bad enough, let alone the state or federal government. A world bureaucracy would be a regulating, snooping, and taxing nightmare. It would be *1984*, worldwide. •

Prop 111

by L.H.R.

When Californians voted to raise the gasoline tax, the only liberal not dancing the lambada over the vote was columnist Richard Cohen. He excoriated Californians for being motivated (I'm not making this up) by "a sign out of the Jim Crow era: For Me Only." Why? Because voters wanted "additional money targeted to specific purposes." Roads are OK, but they're "not—by a long shot—low-income housing." And he's right: you can't drive on government slums.

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When Californians voted for Prop 111, they thought they were making a market exchange: 9c per gallon for unclogged roads. But they didn't realize that traffic jams are not caused by too many private cars or too few roads, but by the absence of a true market.

In the Soviet Union, everything is a botch. No one can know what's needed and where, because there's no free price system or private property. Our socialist road system is no different.

Like Gosplan, the California Department of Transportation cannot make rational economic decisions, only political ones. Just as in the workers' ex-paradise, "free" resources are overused, so we have too many cars on the roads during ever-lengthening rush hours.

Since there's no such thing as a free ride, drivers pay for roads not only through high taxes, but also through crowding. This makes no more economic sense than the lines outside a Soviet grocery store.

With a private road system, prices would change according to supply and demand. It would cost more to use a freeway at 8:00am than at noon, so people would schedule road use to fit their budget. Private roads would also cut down on joy riding; paying for something makes people waste-conscious.

If roads were private, travel in California and other congested areas would become easy. The driver would be king, no longer subjected to the rule of the state traffiklatura.

Under privatization, entrepreneurs would hop to provide new roads of all different sorts at many different prices. No longer would we have to rely on the government planners who have entangled us and designed a system that kills 50,000 Americans every year.

How would road entrepreneurs get property to build on? Not through political power, i.e., eminent domain, but through voluntarily purchases, just as elsewhere in the market. Only then would we know the relative value of roads as compared to homes, businesses, parks, farms, and other uses for land.

The caricature of the private road is a toll booth every mile, but the competitive process would generate user-friendly payment. Only the government can get away with something as annoying as a toll booth. In a private system, drivers might have a bar code on their mirror, scanning devices at entries and exits, and a monthly bill from their local road company.

Most important, the roads would be safer. Today, if an ill-designed intersection kills people, no bureaucrat goes to jail, is fined, or even loses his job. In a private system with full liability, entrepreneurs would make sure their roads were safe.

Private roads may seem like an idea from another planet, but on my office wall is a newspaper from 1796, the *Columbian Centinel* of Boston, full of ads for lotteries held by private road companies. This is the American heritage. Even in Massachusetts.

Prop 111 voters were right to think they should pay for roads, but wrong to think they should do it through Sacramento. We could have freeways that speeded people to their destinations instead of gumming up their lives. That is what the free market would mean. And that is what California and the rest of America needs. ●

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